A Feast for the Soul

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Reflections of a Global Ministries Pilgrim's tour of Zambia and South Africa.

September 1, 2010
by Kathy Clark

September 1st was the first full day of our pilgrimage through Southern Africa in celebration of the 200th anniversary of mission among the Congregational forebears of the United Church of Christ. Our group, made up of Conference Ministers, Global Ministries Staff, and Global Ministries Board Members, arrived safely the evening before in Johannesburg, South Africa, after a long but blissfully uneventful flight from Atlanta, Georgia. After checking into the Dove Guest House and enjoying a delicious dinner of beef curry and vegetables, we gathered in one room to sort through and package the gifts we brought to share with our hosts and partners, representing our various contexts. It was a joyful and chaotic evening, full of anticipation of the people we would meet and the unknown gifts of which we would be the recipients. It felt a little bit like Christmas Eve in an extended family. Travelling together for 12 days, we would certainly become like family to one another very quickly. And we would be gifted in ways we could not yet imagine.

As we took off from the Johannesburg airport on our way to Ndola, Zambia, the sun shone brightly in a slightly hazy sky. We arrived in Southern Africa at the end of winter and before the rainy season, so the grasses were dry and golden brown. Trees and flowers were just beginning to bud, offering the promise of new life. At our guest house that morning, we watched as a pair of small brown birds worked together at building a nest with twigs and small branches they found and carried to their special limb. I wondered if this might serve as a metaphor for what we would discover about mission work in Southern Africa in 2010: the birds were certainly working together in mutual partnership and empowerment toward sustainability and fullness of life. I am not sure if I was a "critical presence," but it was a delight to witness their energetic and hopeful labor.

The people of Southern Africa are exceedingly gracious and are giving me a whole new experience of extravagant welcome. Before this day would end, we would be met by our hosts for the next five days, Dr. Musonda Bwayla, Principal of the United Church of Zambia Theological College, and Rev. Kapembwa Kondolo, Professor of African Studies and Pastor of the congregation associated with the college, along with other sisters and brothers in Christ, including Rev. Albert Bowa, pastor of St. Andrew's Church in Ndola and many of his parishioners who came out to welcome us. Musonda and Kondolo proved not only to be extraordinary hosts and partners in ministry, but quickly became members of our impromptu but

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EVENTS CALENDAR

« < **October 2010** > »

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
26	**27**	**28**	**29**	**30**	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**

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